

Barton Scrapbook 1897 to 1990

Facts, Features and (occasional) Fallacies
reported in Cambridge Newspapers
summarised by

Mike Petty



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Most of these stories originally appeared in the Cambridge Daily/Evening/News or the Cambridgeshire Weekly News. They are supplemented by some articles published in the Cambridge Independent Press or Cambridge Chronicle

I have digital and other copies of most of the stories summarised.

The original volumes are housed in the Cambridgeshire Collection at Cambridge Central Library together with have detailed cuttings files on over 750 topics that have been compiled since the 1960s.

The complete 'Cambridgeshire Scrapbook' of which this is a small section is published online at bit.ly/CambsCollection.

Newspapers sometimes get things wrong. I copy things out incorrectly. Do check. There are a multitude of spelling and layout errors. Please forgive or correct them

News never stops but this file was finished on 31 August 2016.

I will maintain supplements and corrections – contact me for anything you need

Please make what use of these notes that you may. Kindly remember where they came from

See my website – www.mikepetty.org.uk for further notes.

Mike Petty, Stretham

2017

1897 11

On Saturday night a Western force was advancing on Cambridge from the direction of St Neots and an Eastern force had been assembled to protect the town. They established a line of outposts from Coton to Barton church. At about three o'clock the opposing forces came into collision. The first firing took place in Barton village. Barton hill formed a strong point in the defence and here Colonel Cronin, much assisted by the Maxim-guns made a prolonged stand, but the numerical superiority of the attacking force compelled him at length to retire, fighting hard

1900 06 02

Barton church theft, p2

1903 03 16

Magistrates considered renewing the licences of various public houses. The Hoops at Barton was in an untidy state; at Chesterton the Castle Inn was much improved but the Prince of Wales had a great deal of accommodation and was the best in the district. The Black Bull at Longstanton was a genuine business for the benefit of the public and was absolutely essential. The George and Dragon, Swavesey had four bedrooms but the back entrance gave facility for secret drinking – this was a parish where there were too many public houses in proportion to the population. The licence was granted on condition the back way was closed up

1903 04 18

A serious fire occurred at the village of Barton by which almost the whole of the Manor Farm, with the exception of the house, was razed to the ground. It is supposed the drum of a traction engine after working for a considerable time, got very hot and some corn which was standing near by caught alight. A cart with horse attached was close by and the horse was taken out only just in time, being slightly singed. The cart was consumed by the flames. The men worked assiduously with buckets and water but their efforts were without avail and soon all the farm buildings were blazing.

1903 04 20

Barton fire, p3

1906 06 09

A serious fire at Barton Rectory resulted in the picturesque old two-storey structure being completely gutted. Mrs Monkhouse, the vicar's wife, who is an invalid, was in bed and it was with difficulty that she was aroused in time to make a hasty escape in her sleeping apparel. Mr Robinson cycled to Cambridge to give the alarm at the Fire Station. A plentiful water supply was available from the village pond but it was evident the building would be gutted and it was left to burn itself out. The church books and plate were rescued but a servant's bicycle was reduced to scrap iron. 06 06 09a

1906 06 16

Visiting the snug little village of Barton and inspecting the ruins of the Rectory fire, one finds that the interior has been thoroughly burnt out – scarcely a rafter or beam of the upper floor remaining and the roof entirely non-existent. But the outer walls stand straight and sound and outside, almost unscorched, clings the ivy and climbing roses with flowers still on them. I could not help wondering why people are fleeing from such congenial surroundings to the toil and strife of the town and factory. 06 06 16a

1908 02 15

Many recall the 'Knocking Ghost of Barton' when a succession of thumps were heard in a farmhouse and many a skilled ghost-layer were at their wits' end for an explanation. The real reason was hit upon by accident. Near at hand was a stable and beneath the floor was a disused iron pipe. When the horse kicked the sound was communicated to the house but so muffled and mysterious that no other cause than the supernatural was supposed. The Barton ghost had a good run before being run to earth. - 07 09 30a White Horse Barton landlord 50 years – 08 02 15c

1910 07 22

Fire broke out at Great Dumpling's Farm, Barton. A cyclist gave the alarm at the Ridley Hall post and a section of the Cambridge brigade under the command of Capt Greef soon had the flames under control. Farming implements including a self-binder, chaff-cutter and elevator were damaged. PC Evans saw two boys running away; he caught one who admitted they'd been playing with matches near some straw on the farm 10 07 22a

1910 08 12

A well-known travelling fishmonger from Cambridge, when watering his horse in a pond near Conington church, got stuck in the mud – at least his horse and cart did – and the services of men with ropes and a tumbrel cart were needed before they could be extricated. A quoits handicap played between members of Barton village club during the last few weeks was won by F. Pratt with C. Trundle and T. Disbrey runners up. At Girton the Rector presented watches to schoolchildren Gladys Nightingale and Victor Watson for nine years' perfect attendance 10 08 12

1910 11 11

A convoy, broken-down and captured by the enemy near Cantelupe Farm Haslingfield formed the objective of some interesting operations by the University Officer Training Corps and a small force of public school boys from the Leys School. The Cambridge garrison were very short of fuses and a convoy of wagons, disguised as manure carts had tried to reach them. But the horses became exhausted and they'd been obliged to halt for the night. The commander sent out column 500 strong to bring them in but encountered the opposing cavalry. The Maxim gun detachment did good service, firing from near the inn at Barton 10 11 11c & d

1912 01 05

Worshippers at Barton parish church were greatly disappointed last Sunday. They waited patiently until about seven o'clock when, as no clergyman made his appearance, the choir began to leave, followed by the congregation. For the last two years the Rev A.L. Phillips has very kindly ministered, quite voluntarily and without payment, and held two services, morning and evening. But last Sunday he had an appointment to preach at Somersham. He found a friend to take the morning service but he could find nobody for the evening one. He accordingly sent word to that effect but owing to some misunderstanding, the congregation was not informed. 12 01 05f

1913 09 12

Barton parish council consider council houses, shooting over the allotment land and the parish award

1914 04 10

New Organ Opened.—The opening by Mr. El G. Wilson of a new pipe organ took place at the Baptist Chapel (Barton) on Thursday last before a full attendance Mr. Wilson spoke of the great improvement the new organ was over the old one, and also of the great help it would be to the organist (Miss White) in leading the singing. - 1914 04 10 CIPof

1923 05 12

John Manning of Bedford was summoned for using a locomotives on the highway to draw more than three loaded wagons. Superintendent Allen spoke to seeing a traction engine at Barton drawing four loaded wagons. Three wagons were loaded with tackle belonging to roundabouts, and the fourth wagon, bore the words "Water cart". There were five wooden tubs in it, three of which contained coal. Witness told defendant he was only allowed to draw three wagons and a water cart. He said the last was a water cart. Witness asking where the water was, but he could not show it. There was no water in the wagons for engine purposes. Defendant admitted putting coal on the wagon. He could not carry enough in his bunker for the journey. He was fined 10s.

1924 10 25c

Barton Parish Council they repaired fences around the recreation ground to keep the cattle in but defendant chopped down the gatepost. Six months ago he had a trench dug to improve his drainage

and consequently the recreation ground was getting very marshy, the grass had got very sodden and there was a very bad smell. They had had numerous complaints

1926 02 20

Sir – Cyclists and motorists who frequent the road to Sandy will probably have noticed Barton church tower, nestling amongst the trees. It is in need of considerable repairs. The east and west walls are badly cracked. There is a peal of five excellent bells which it is considered unsafe to have rung with the tower in its present condition. Barton is a small and poor parish. We have raised £200 for repairs but are stuck for the last hundred. Perhaps some of your readers may feel inclined to help us. – J.C. Carter, Vicar.

1928 03 24

The Women's Institutes Home Crafts Exhibition at the Guildhall features a display of the rooms of village homes, the furniture and other smaller articles of which had been made by the villagers themselves. A sitting room had been made by Balsham members, including a carved sideboard, tables and chairs, a settee made out of boxes and cushions, and a screen made by 23 men. The Barton group showed a bedroom with a wash-hand-stand with marble top. Even the soap was home-made and a pair of candlesticks were made of cotton-reels.

1928 07 24

The inhabitants of Barton evidently believe in the slogan 'Unity is strength' for practically all of the organisation in the village amalgamated and held a flower show and fete. No fewer than ten groups took part, representing all types of village life, including the W.I., Nursing Association, quoits, football and cricket clubs, boy scouts and the Institute for the Blind. Pilbeam's Band was in attendance and provided an enjoyable programme of music

1929 02 27

Cambridge Photographic Club's exhibition contains a number of local views. Mr Bellamy has eight nice photographs, the best of which is 'Farm near Barton'. Mr Watson's 'Suffolk Road' is a fine rich picture, as is also his 'Pampisford'. In the novice's section Miss Dorothy Bellamy has a well-arranged print 'Street in Chesterford' and Mr Boutflower shows a charming 'Over Ferry'

1931 03 13

Every woman who plays hockey is proud of Miss Gaskell. In 1914 she took the first women's hockey team to Australia and has taken teams to the United States and South Africa. During the war she became Commandant of the Red Cross Convalescent Hospital for soldiers at St Chads that was open until 1919. She then started Barton W.I. and joined the Folk Dancing Society. 31 03 13a

1936 12 10

Private crematorium at Barton turned down – protest – 36 12 10h

1938 09 24

Mr A.E. Page started as a butcher at a small shop in Cherryhinton Road in 1897 and now has six shops selling goods of the finest quality at reasonable prices. His factory in Coven Garden produces pies, sausages and cooked meats some from animals bred and fed on his own farm at Barton. He knows it is worth advertising in the CDN 37 09 24a

1938 07 16

King's Cup air race has turning point at Barton – 38 07 016

1939 10 04

Barton ARP hut – photo – 39 10 04

1941 01 31

Well-known farmer.— The death of Mr. Charles Albert Franklin, which occurred at his residence, "Kingswood", Cambridge Road, Barton, after a brief illness, will be regretted by a large circle of friends. Until his retirement about a year ago, Mr. Franklin had for many years been a successful farmer at Hoback Farm, Wimpole. For some years he was a sidesman at Wimpole Church and a manager of the Church of England School.

1942 04 27

Barton Home Guard marching – photo – 42 04 27

1942 09 21

Barton farm buildings destroyed in one of largest fires seen for some time; village 'lit up like day; animals burned – 42 09 21

1944 12 01

Awarded M.M. at 19. News has been received that Pte John Hills, of The Leys, Barton, has been awarded the Military Medal. He is only 19. Before joining up, he was employed by Messrs. Olivers and Sons, Histon.

1947 07 31

At the meeting of the Chesterton Rural District Council it was reported that a further three parishes (Coton, Fen Drayton and Lolworth) had been supplied with water mains. It was anticipated that the work involving the supply to Barton, Comberton, Toft, Haslingfield and Harlton would be put in hand during the coming year. Several parishes, notably Croxton, Eltisley, Graveley, Hardwick and Dry Drayton were extremely short of water for domestic and stock purposes and trouble was anticipated in the summer months. The position could not be improved until a new high level water tower was erected thereby affording sufficient pressure to enable a mains supply to be taken to these villages.

1949 03 18

Proposals for further extension of Cambridge boundaries to meet housing needs were disclosed at the Town Council. It is now suggested that Barton, Coton, Madingley, Fen Ditton, Girton, Horningsea, Grantchester and Teversham should be included.

1949 10 10

Six trade union veterans with unbroken membership of the Amalgamated Union of Building Trade Workers were honoured at a social held in the Norfolk Street Labour Hall, Cambridge. Mr J. Docwra of Barton and Mr W. Northfield of Ross St received gold badges. They have been members of the union for 60 years. Others with 50 years membership were Mr S. Pope of Sturton St, Mr H. Hibbett of Histon, Mr T. Runham of Catharine St & Mr W. E. Wilson of Newmarket

1950 03 20

Will the character of Barton village - which has been likened in attractiveness to Grantchester and Madingley –be destroyed if a new estate of 200 houses is built half a mile outside it. This was one of the main points raised at an inquiry at Shire Hall. The developer argued that Barton at the moment was far from being attractively rural, because it consisted largely of council houses and the like, of which a large proportion were built in what might be unkindly described as yellow lavatory brick. Of course, Barton had a certain village life, but to imagine that it could have an independent life was completely unreal. Barton should and would eventually be used as a dormitory village for Cambridge.

1951 06 11

The Cambridgeshire of the future will have a number of new roads, fire & police stations, sewerage schemes, old peoples' homes, a new children's home and a mental deficiency colony. Planners say villages recommended for enlargement include Milton, Fulbourn, Shelford, Barton and Coton where the population will increase from 400 to 1,840. Road improvements recommended include a bypass to

the east of Girton relinking the road interrupted by the RAF station but Cambridge bypasses are not shown as surveys show there is no immediate need for them.

1952 03 27

When Chesterton RDC acquired land to erect 2,000 council houses in “necklace villages” in order to accommodate the “over-spilled” population of Cambridge they should obtain sufficient land to allow for private building as well, said a councillor. Council houses were subsidised to the extent of £35 12s. and building private houses would ease the financial burden. The sewerage of the parishes of Milton and Great and Little Shelford was already in and they should be the first villages to be developed. Fulbourn, Stapleford, Harston, Barton and Coton were also on the priority list.

1953 11 30

Barton inhabitants have long felt the need of a children’s corner in their recreation ground where youngsters could enjoy themselves without harm. Now the children have swings, a sandpit, a new type of ‘horses’ swing, see-saws and various other popular playthings. And practically every member of the village has given some sort of tree or shrub to surround it. David Kindersley, a sculptor who lives in the village, has made a beautiful plaque in the form of a sun dial.

1955 01 17

A Cottenham man, H.A. Harvey, is planning to run a ‘Poor Man’s Tour’ to the Continent by luxury coach. A Belgian tour will cost £22 and people could be picked up at Histon. This will save having to make a horrifying journey across London to reach the coach station. But Barton Transport, Eastern Counties and Mr H. Richmond objected. One said that in spite of wide advertising last year they had only received six firm bookings and there was not a great deal of Continental traffic from Cambridge. British Railways say that they would not expect a great demand for excursions in this area.

1955 12 14

The petrol station of today fills the place held by the blacksmith 50 years ago argued the company appealed to put up a petrol service station opposite the White Hart public house, Cambridge Road, Barton. It was of the utmost importance but small villages could not always afford to have one of their own. But the parish council objected and the County said it was the wrong place; Haslingfield or Comberton would be better sites. 55 12 14

1959 05 20

Kings Grove Estate Barton – advertisement – 59 05 20d

The Cambridgeshire Collection has newspaper cuttings files from this date

1960 12 02

The Cambridge Independent Press published illustrated feature articles on villages including Barton – 60 12 02 CIP

1961 05 22

Barton bowls green opening – 61 05 22

1965 11 19

Modern architecture house Barton – 65 11 19c

1972 12 27

Flu hit the now-traditional barrel-rolling relay race at Grantchester on Boxing Day and a cool drizzle resulted in fewer than usual spectators turning out for the event. But neither the practical difficulties nor the celebrations of the previous day prevented a team from nearby Barton romping home minutes ahead of their rivals to carry off the 48-pint prize. Their nearest rivals were a team from the Queen's Head at Sawston. Women made their debut last year but illness had depleted entries down to one team - from the Green Dragon in Cambridge so the four women agreed to divide into two team and Mrs Tricia Newman and Mrs Ann Carter won the day. Their prize was 48 pints

1974 03 26c

Robin Page is again finding himself unpopular – this time for publishing some home truths about his home village, Barton. His book “The decline of an English village” has upset several residents. He believes that newcomers have diminished the quality of life of people born and bred in Barton. But the row is unlikely to match the time he was sacked by the Health Department for offending the Official Secrets Act.

1976 05 10

Barton villagers paid tribute to Mr Bert Crick and his wife May to mark their retirement from running the village post office after 30 years. He came 45 years ago, providing both a milk round and a greengrocery round service before taking over his Wimpole Road shop. They intend carrying on with their General Store; “It gives us something to do”, he said. The post office business has been transferred to Conkers store at the other end of the village.

1977 01 20

A grant of £650 is about to set the ball rolling in a bid to save something of a fast-fading group of wall paintings at Barton parish church. But it will scarcely cover the cost of restoring half of one of the major paintings – a picture of St Michael weighing souls, which is above the north door. Work is due to start after Easter. The paintings remained hidden for many years after they were covered up during the Reformation period. An attempt at restoration was made in 1929 but modern methods were not available and the work was not a success. Over the years the paintings have deteriorated further. Five years ago costs were estimated at around £3,000 and prices have spiralled since then.

1977 09 01

Experts have successfully uncovered medieval wall paintings at Barton church. They have spent weeks cleaning off wax applied in 1929 in a previous attempt to restore the paintings which probably did more harm than good. It was believed then that wax helped to protect them but experts have now decided that damp coming through ancient church walls is sealed into paintings by the wax layer and leads to severe blistering. The paintings were probably done in vegetable dyes by travelling artists & were covered up during the Reformation period. The latest efforts have brought to light new details including an evil-looking devil; the early workers thought this was a duck's head

1979 04 30

The 1,800 villagers of Duxford have lost their tiny branch surgery, despite a petition calling for its retention. Now they have to go to Sawston. Doctors say that the old days when the doctor was a comforter and father figure handing out bottles of red medicine have passed and the higher standards of modern medicine depend on tests and examinations which cannot be carried out at a branch surgery. Other surgeries have closed recently in Barton and Barrington while a question mark hangs over those at Great Chesterford and Elmdon. At Soham Health Centre there are minibuses to bring patients in from neighbouring villages and this might be arranged for Duxford.

1980 10 07

Grantchester villagers gave a massive thumbs-down to County suggestions that their 114-year-old primary school should be closed. The number of children had dropped from 108 to 31 as parents were not satisfied with its new ethos. It had previously attracted the children of visiting academics. But the number of children in the village is dropping, the teacher-pupil ratio was 1:12 when other schools had 30 or more children for every teach, the cost was unacceptably high and there were places at Barton

80 10 07b

1981 07 07

A last-minute bid to lift the threat of closure from Grantchester Church of England school has failed; it will close in July 1982 and the pupils transferred to Barton. Villagers wanted it to be retained as a one-teacher school until there were more pupils. But rising house prices meant that people with young families could no longer afford to live there and it was a question of economics. 81 07 07a

1982 07 07

A scheme to clean up Bourn Brook could be harmful and a waste of money, claims Barton farmer, Robin Page. It will also upset a conservation scheme to restore trees to the brook bank, introduce orchids to meadowland and bring in speckled-wood butterflies. But Anglian Water says they will ensure its character is retained. 82 07 07

1982 07 28

Muck-spreading on fields near Barton has infuriated villagers who say the stench is putting them off their food and making them ill. The treated sewage sludge was delivered during the winter but when workers started spreading it people began complaining. The farmer said it was perfectly safe and there would have been no problem if the wind had not blown towards the village. But the smell is obnoxious and he would not use the material again unless AWA found a way of removing it. 82 07 28

1985 05 17

A fascinating glimpse into Barton's past is one of the highlights of the village festival to commemorate the restoration of the church 100 years ago. 'The Cross and the Plough' is a play written by Tony Brown and the entire cast is drawn from Barton Drama Group. It is based on historical events ranging from the Normans to the effects of enclosure and as well as being informative has some lighter, humorous moments. 85 05 17a